



PETER P. FLORES

TEXAS SENATOR

SENATE DISTRICT 19

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

86th Texas Legislature

COMMITTEES:
Senate Finance
Senate Natural Resources
& Economic Development



Senate Health & Human Services
Senate Criminal Justice
Senate Higher Education
Senate Redistricting

The Senate of The State of Texas

Senator Peter P. Flores

District 19

Howdy!

The biennial Texas Legislative Session is now concluded. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in the Texas Senate and fight for real reform to help Texas families and businesses. Nationally, politics is a divided mess with little meaningful action. In Texas, it's the opposite. I am proud to work with Senators and Representatives on both sides of the aisle. In the Senate, hundreds of bills passed with unanimous, or nearly unanimous, bipartisan support.

The goal this Session was to tackle the core issues: property tax reform, school finance, disaster recovery, and public safety. Since making history as the first Hispanic Republican Senator, I worked closely with Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and my fellow members of the Legislature on these issues and more, passing a fiscally-responsible state budget and maintaining Texas' unprecedented job growth and economic success. Of the 4,300+ record votes in the Texas Senate, I was proud to vote on 100% of them—maintaining a perfect voting record.

Our Senate District is large and diverse: from Eagle Pass to Alpine, Pecos to San Antonio, including 460+ miles of the Texas-Mexico border, forming a geographic area larger than the state of Maine. The issues in south San Antonio and those in west Texas can be very different—but I do my best to represent both.

As a Texas Senator, I am proud to continue a lifetime of public service. My past work as a Texas Game Warden looked different—more time in the brush, less time in a Senate Chamber—but at its core the work is identical. Both roles require cooperation with the community and the preservation of our Texas values.

You are part of that community; indeed, as I say often, you're my boss. In this newsletter, you will find: legislative updates affecting you and Senate District 19; district map with local field offices; policy survey for you to share input; constituent photos, and more.

Thank you for support and encouragement. It is an absolute honor to represent you in the Texas Senate.

God Bless Texas,

Peter P. Flores



INSIDE:

- State Budget
- Property Tax Relief
- Education
- Health Care
- Action Needed: Policy Survey



BALANCED BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Texas State Budget is \$250 billion and the primary reason the Texas Legislature meets every other year. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Flores played a crucial role in the formation of the state’s 2020-2021 budget, fighting for Senate District 19 every step of the way.

SENATE DISTRICT 19 FUNDING PRIORITIES

\$190.3 million: San Antonio State Hospital
\$13 million: UT Health San Antonio
\$6 million: Law enforcement radios and equipment to Texas Parks and Wildlife
\$5 million: Eagle Pass Law Enforcement Center
\$800 million: Border security
\$1.9 million: Increase to Veterans Commission for additional rural Veterans Claims Counseling

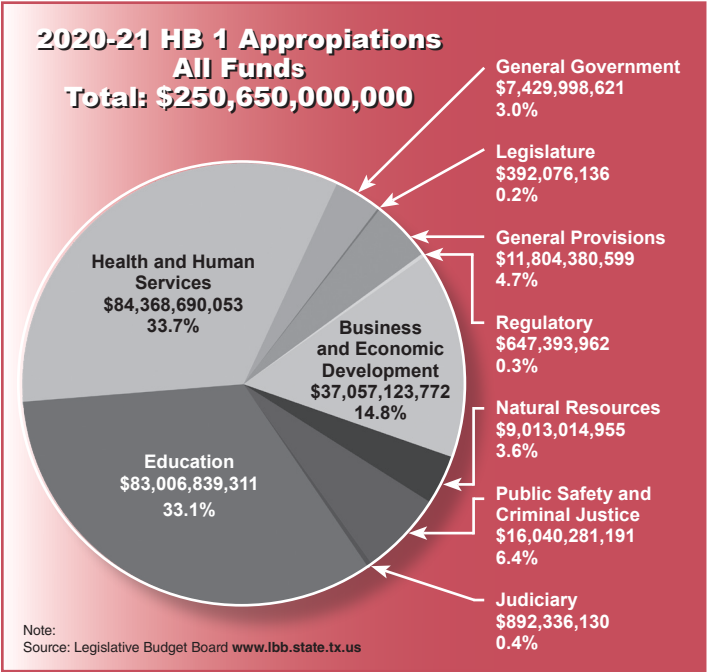
This budget prioritized property tax relief, school finance, and disaster recovery. **To provide immediate property tax relief, \$5 billion was allocated to directly reduce 2020 property taxes for Texas families and businesses.** Texas allocated \$2 billion to pay for raises for hard-working teachers, librarians, counselors, and nurses, with a special focus on veteran educators. The Legislature also allocated money to balance the Teacher Retirement System of Texas and enhance school safety. Education spending saw a drastic increase from the last budget of \$12 billion, or 20% increase, as Texas continues to fulfill its Constitutional duty to establish an efficient system of free, public schools.

While drafting the budget, Senator Flores fought for Senate District 19’s financial needs. At the top of the list was the renovation of the San Antonio State Hospital (SASH). Senator Flores secured \$190.3 million to replace the outdated building with a new 300-bed hospital

on the current campus. SASH serves 12 of the 17 counties in Senate District 19, representing a vast majority of Senator Flores’ constituents.

Other Senate District 19 appropriations include \$13 million to the UT Health at San Antonio. UTHSA is a nationally-recognized research leader in aging, post-traumatic stress disorder, Alzheimer’s, and other neurological diseases overlapping with many of the same issue areas and geographic area as SASH.

Additionally, the budget allocated \$5 million to a new law enforcement center in Eagle Pass for the Department of Public Safety. This comes in addition to existing \$800 million in border security funding, covering the more than 460 miles of the Texas-Mexico border in Senate District 19. Senator Flores was committed to making a balanced state budget work for all Texans, but especially Senate District 19 constituents.





PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND REFORM

State leadership identified property tax reform as a top priority this legislative session. Senator Flores agreed: from Pecos to Pleasanton, skyrocketing property taxes are forcing families out of homes and causing businesses to shutter their doors. **The Texas Legislature passed the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019 which provides immediate property tax relief and limits future tax-rate growth.**

Some reforms are active immediately, others will take some time. Immediately, \$5 billion is allocated for property tax relief through the compression of school district tax rates. Long term, the Legislature provided property tax reform by lowering the voter-approval tax rate threshold, formerly known as the rollback rate.

The voter-approval tax rate is the key to long-term property tax reform. This rate represents the limit by which taxing units can increase taxes

without voter approval. If the tax rate is higher than the threshold, voters must approve of the new rate.

Currently, that voter-approval rate is 8% -- this session, the Legislature lowered it to 3.5%. **This means moving forward, taxing units who attempt to raise taxes by more than 3.5% annually will need voter approval first.**



Senator Flores Speaks at Press Conference on Border Security



ABOUT PETE FLORES

Senator Peter P. Flores was raised in South Texas, graduating from Laredo Martin High School and then attending Laredo Junior College before transferring and graduating from Texas A&M University. Senator Flores spent most of his career as a Texas Game Warden, serving the State for 27 years and achieving the rank of Colonel and overseeing all 500+

Wardens. He was the first Hispanic Texas Game Warden Colonel in history.

Senator Flores was elected in a special election in September 2018. He currently serves on Senate Committees: Finance, Criminal Justice, Natural Resources & Economic Development, Health & Human Services, Redistricting, and Higher Education. He lives in Pleasanton with his wife Elizabeth and they have two daughters and two grandsons.



EDUCATING THE FUTURE OF TEXAS

Along with property tax reform, the school finance system was designated as a top issue this legislative session. The formula by which Texas funds thousands of schools across the state was outdated and unbalanced. The Legislature provided a much-needed update. Senator Flores joined the Legislature in rebalancing the funding formulas, increasing state funding, empowering teachers, and achieving long-term solutions.

The Legislature significantly increased the allotment schools receive per student from \$5,140 to \$6,160. This is the largest increase in a decade and will allow school districts more money for students, classrooms, and teachers. The Legislature also allocated \$2 billion for dynamic pay raises for teachers, librarians, counselors, and nurses; including \$140 million for a merit pay program to reward good teachers with better pay (to be administered by the school district). The minimum teacher salary schedule will be increased, as well as non-salary investments like professional development and mentoring programs.

The Legislature is providing a “13th check” to the retired teachers who have already served this state. Over 400,000 former school district employees rely on the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). For most, this pension is their one source of income after decades of teaching. All eligible TRS members who have retired as of 2018 should receive a one-time supplemental check up to \$2,000.

Higher education was a focus too, with public universities across the state receiving over \$480 million in formula funding increases. Senator Flores authored a bill to authorize Texas A&M – San Antonio to create a new fee for an athletics program, building student culture, competition, and boosting the school’s brand. This authorization follows a student referendum approving this fee increase by an overwhelming majority. The Texas Legislature understands that the future of Texas rests on education.



BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Texas boasts one of the strongest economies in the world with record low unemployment rates. This is due in part to the state’s low taxation and low regulation. The Legislature took steps to protect that pro-business growth.

Often, the best economic development is for the government to move out of the way. In this effort, Senator Flores sponsored a bill to allow the Texas General Land Office to offer for sale the G.J. Sutton Building. The building, just east of downtown San Antonio, has been unused for years, costing taxpayers \$300,000 annually for security and upkeep. Legislative approval is required prior to the sale of state property. The legislation includes preservation of the name “G.J. Sutton” on the future property or building, honoring the namesake.

Senator Flores passed a bill that allows the cities of Pearsall and Carrizo Springs to use money derived from their hotel occupancy taxes for economic development projects. This is a privilege enjoyed by many other cities and will allow both to develop as a tourist destination. Senator Flores also

passed a bill to create the West Pecos Management District: a 1,000+ acre area that will construct and finance infrastructure improvements to address critical housing and other community needs of the City of Pecos area.

In big agricultural business news, the Legislature legalized the farming of industrial hemp, in line with passage of the Farm Bill, updating federal standards. The crop is widely used in textiles, construction materials, and other products. The Texas climate is ripe for this crop and will greatly help our Texas farmers join this international market.

Senate District 19, home of the Permian Basin and Eagle Ford Shale plays, is a national leader in oil and gas production. The District has over 24,000 oil and gas wells, serving as a boon to Texas as the industry as a whole provides billions in tax revenue, playing a critical role in funding the Economic Stabilization Fund. This activity has a toll on the infrastructure—it is imperative that the state maintain road quality in counties, an important aspect of the County Transportation Infrastructure Fund (CTIF).



HEALTH CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

One of the top priorities for Senator Flores was the renovation of San Antonio State Hospital. As described earlier, the hospital serves 12 counties in Senate District 19 and is in desperate need of reform. Senator Flores fought for funding for the hospital, providing for some of the most at-risk of our population.

The Legislature recognized the need for more mental health research, forming the Texas Mental Health Consortium consisting of universities, hospitals, health care providers, and more. The state is dedicating \$100 million

towards the Consortium, funding new research initiatives in Texas mental health and increasing access for all Texans.

The Legislature also saw the need to expand the Compassionate Use Act, governing medical cannabis. The program will now include seizure disorders, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, incurable neurodegenerative diseases, terminal cancer, autism, and more. A board-certified physician who specializes in the applicable condition may prescribe low-THC (less than or equal to 0.5%) medical cannabis products for use by these patients.



PROTECTING LIFE

Senator Flores recognizes that there is no right more fundamental than the right to life; especially for the unborn babies of Texas. In the state budget, the Legislature allocated \$79 million to the Alternatives to Abortion program, which promotes childbirth and provides support services to pregnant women and adoptive parents.

Senator Flores was proud to support the Texas Born-Alive Infant Protection Act. The bill protects babies who survive an abortion by requiring physicians to exercise standard care and diligence to preserve the child's life and health. Another bill passed by the Legislature seeks to prevent Texas taxpayer money from funding abortion by preventing cities and state entities from providing anything of value to an abortion clinic or affiliate. **The right to life must always be upheld in Texas.**



PUBLIC SAFETY AND BORDER SECURITY

As a career law enforcement officer, Senator Flores understands the importance of public safety. The Legislature worked across the board on initiatives to combat human trafficking, increase state crime lab capacities, create new child protection courts, and reduce wait-times at driver license offices. Another major aspect of public safety is border security.

Senate District 19 encompasses 460+ miles of the Texas-Mexico border. This international boundary is a federal responsibility, but where the federal government fails, Texas must step up. **This Session,**

like the previous two, the Texas Legislature allocated \$800 million for border security. This year has seen unprecedented levels of people attempting to cross the border illegally. And while this is an issue that affects all of Texas, you, Senate District 19 constituents, feel this more than most. It is our cities, ranches, and communities that are being overwhelmed – rest assured the Legislature is looking out for you.

As part of an omnibus judicial reform bill, Senator Flores created the 454th Judicial District, composed of Medina County only. All cases from the 38th District Court, currently composed of Medina, Real, and Uvalde counties, and the district attorney will transfer to this new Court. The goal is to better distribute the caseload in this growing area and thus increase Court accountability and responsiveness.



Senator Flores Worked Closely with Governor Abbott on Property Tax Reform



PROTECTING WATER RIGHTS

Senator Flores sponsored a bill to codify an agreed-to definition of “developed land” and provides limitations for Base Irrigation Groundwater (BIG) conversion processes. The bill also validates past Edwards Aquifer Authority rules and actions regarding changes in purpose or place-of-use associated with BIG, in order to protect property owners and to avoid future confusion within the established Edwards Aquifer water market. The Legislature took other steps to ensure water quality and water rights are protected for all Texans, but especially in the rural areas.

★ CONSTITUENT PHOTOS

Thanks to All the Senate District 19 Constituents Who Visited the Capitol!



Texas A&M San Antonio



UTSA



Del Rio Mariachi Band



Uvalde County



Medina County



Reeves County



Val Verde County



High School FFA



Valles 75th Marriage Anniversary

★ SERVE TEXAS ON APPOINTMENTS AND COMMISSIONS

Governor Abbott makes appointments to state boards, commissions, councils, and task forces on various areas of interest. The Texas government relies on these groups of volunteer subject matter experts to focus on specific issues and coordinate with state agencies. Senator Flores is always looking for constituents to nominate—please contact the Capitol office if you are interested in a position.

A list of positions can be found on the Governor's website: gov.texas.gov/appointments

★ SENATE DISTRICT 19 POLICY SURVEY

**ACTION
NEEDED!**

Senator Flores Needs Your Feedback!

Senator Flores relies on constituent feedback to properly serve you in the Texas Senate. Below is a link to a quick, 5-minute online survey on the policy issues most important to you.

senate.texas.gov/SD19survey



*Use cell phone
camera to scan*

★ CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Early Voting: October 21 to November 1, 2019. Election Day: November 5, 2019

Proposition 1 (HJR 72)

The constitutional amendment permitting a person to hold more than one office as a municipal judge at the same time.

Proposition 2 (SJR 79)

The constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board in an amount not to exceed \$200 million to provide financial assistance for the development of certain projects in economically distressed areas.

Proposition 3 (HJR 34)

The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for a temporary exemption from ad valorem taxation of a portion of the appraised value of certain property damaged by a disaster.

Proposition 4 (HJR 38)

The constitutional amendment

prohibiting the imposition of an individual income tax, including a tax on an individual's share of partnership and unincorporated association income.

Proposition 5 (SJR 24)

The constitutional amendment dedicating the revenue received from the existing state sales and use taxes that are imposed on sporting goods to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Historical Commission to protect Texas' natural areas, water quality, and history by acquiring, managing, and improving state and local parks and historic sites while not increasing the rate of the state sales and use taxes.

Proposition 6 (HJR 12)

The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to increase by \$3 billion the maximum bond amount authorized for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

Proposition 7 (HJR 151)

The constitutional amendment allowing increased distributions to the available school fund.

Proposition 8 (HJR 4)

The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the flood infrastructure fund to assist in the financing of drainage, flood mitigation, and flood control projects.

Proposition 9 (HJR 95)

The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation precious metal held in a precious metal depository located in this state.

Proposition 10 (SJR 32)

The constitutional amendment to allow the transfer of a law enforcement animal to a qualified caretaker in certain circumstances.



Useful State Government Toll-free Numbers



SENATE DISTRICT 19 COUNTY CLERKS:

Atascosa:	(830) 767-2511
Bexar:	(210) 335-2216
Brewster:	(432) 837-6200
Crockett:	(731) 696-5452
Dimmitt:	(830)-876-4238
Edwards:	(830) 683-2235
Frio:	(830) 334-8073
Kinney:	(830) 563-2521
Maverick:	(830) 773-2629
Medina:	(830) 741-6070
Pecos:	(432) 336-7555
Real:	(830) 232-5202
Reeves:	(432) 445-5467
Terrell:	(432) 345-2391
Uvalde:	(830) 278-6614
Val Verde:	(830)-774-7564
Zavala:	(830) 374-2331

STATE GOVERNMENT NUMBERS:

Information and Referral Hotline	.....211
Secretary of State	
Voter Information	.....(800) 252-VOTE (8683)

Office of the Attorney General	
Child Support Division	.....(800) 252-8014
Consumer Protection	.....(800) 621-0508
Public Information/Open Records	.....(877) 673-6839
Texas Workforce Commission Unemployment and Workforce Solutions	.....(800) 832-2829
Mortgage & Foreclosure Assistance\ Texas	
Department of Housing and Community Affairs	.....(800) 792-1119
Tx. Dept. of Savings and Mortgage Lending	.....(877) 276-5550
Office of Consumer Credit	
Commissioner	.....(800) 5381579
Texas Department of Insurance	
Workers' Compensation Hotline	.....(888) 489-2667
Office of Injured Employee Counsel	.....(866) 393-6432
Consumer Helpline/ File a Complaint	.....(800) 252-3439
Department of Family and Protective Services	
Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline	.....(800) 252-5400
Foster Care and Adoption Information	.....(800) 233-3405
Texas Youth & Runaway Hotline	.....(800) 989-6884
Department of Public Safety	
Concealed Handgun Licenses	.....(800) 224-5744

Driver's Licenses	.....(512) 424-2600
Surcharges, Driver Responsibility Program	.....
	.....(512) 424-2600
Texas Veterans Commission	
Veterans Hotline	.....(800) 252-8387
Dept. of Aging & Disability Services	
Office of Consumer Rights and Services	.....(800) 458-9858
Dept. of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services	
Services Information Hotline	.....(800) 628-5115
Dept. of State Health Services	
Complaint Hotline	.....(888) 973-0022
Information and Referral Hotline	.....(888) 963-7111
Teacher Retirement System	
Telephone Counseling Center	.....(800) 223-8778
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
Public Assistance Hotline	.....(800) 687-4040
Environmental Complaints	.....(888) 777-3186
Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid	.....(956) 447-4837
State Bar of Texas	
Complaints against your lawyer	.....(800) 932-1900
Texas Dept. of Motor Vehicles Information Hotline	....
	.....(888) 368-4689
Complaints Against Vehicle Dealers	.....(800) 687-7846

THE TEXAS SENATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, RELIGION, AGE OR DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT OR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES.



Senator Peter P. Flores

The Texas State Senate
P.O. Box 12068 Austin, Texas 78711

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2468
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Contact Senator Peter Flores

Email: District19.Flores@senate.texas.gov
Facebook: [/SenatorPeteFlores](https://www.facebook.com/SenatorPeteFlores)
Twitter: [@PeteFloresTX](https://twitter.com/PeteFloresTX)

FT. STOCKTON OFFICE
612 Main Street
Ft. Stockton, TX 79735
CONSTITUENT LIAISON:
Marshal Hoak
marshal.hoak@senate.texas.gov

DEL RIO OFFICE
City of Del Rio
Transportation Bldg.
100 West Ogden
Del Rio, TX 78840

CONSTITUENT LIAISON: **ZACHARY CADENA**
(830) 703-8515
zachary.cadena@senate.texas.gov

CAPITOL OFFICE
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711
(512) 463-0119



SAN ANTONIO OFFICE
Texas A&M San Antonio
One University Way
Patriots Casa Room 205
San Antonio, TX 78224

CONSTITUENT LIAISON: **GRACIE FLORES**
(830) 703-8515
gracie.flores@senate.texas.gov

THE TEXAS SENATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, RELIGION, AGE, OR DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT OR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES.